Summit Talk in the Bag

LONDON (UPI) — British Prime Minister Macmillan, fresh from talks with President Eisenhower, told a cheering House of Commons yesterday that a summit conference on Berlin appeared in the bag.

"Everyone seems to think there will be one," Macmillan said in his first report to the parliament on his peace mission to Washington and other Western capitals.

Macmillan said he agreed with President Eisenhower and other Western leaders that the 2,250,000 West Berliners "must be allowed to live the life of their own choice."

Macmillan said the West's latest note to the Russians was expected to be delivered to Moscow Thursday afternoon. Though he would not disclose its details, he indicated the West was proposing an East-West foreign ministers' meeting May 11 in Geneva, to be followed up by a summit conference later in the summer.

Texts of the separate U.S., British, French and West German notes were approved in Paris yesterday by the entire 15-nation NATO permanent council.

Tympanist in Charcoal

★ ★ ★

Students Comment on Symphony

Music Key to Wonder

By BERT BINNY

"It taught me how wonderful the world of music can be!"

This was just one expression of opinion from a junior high school student who, with about 1,450 others, attended the symphony concerts staged especially for them on March 22 and 23 at the Royal Theatre.

★ ★ ★

Seeing that these performances were designed for this special audience, the opinions of that audience are naturally interesting and valuable. They all came from grades 7 and 8 at Central, Colquitz, S. J Willis, Oak Bay and Lansdowne Junior High Schools.

Access to some 800 such opinions, the great majority individual but some representative of entire divisions, provides a consenus covering close to 60 per cent of the total attendance.

MARILYN STROUTS
. . . music in motion

Singing Missed

Selections from "My Fair Lady" and "South Pacific" and an arrangement of "The British Grenadiers" and "Peter and the Wolf" created the greatest impression. The actual rendition of the first three was almost unanimously acclaimed but enjoyment of "South Pacific", played at the second concert, was somewhat tempered by the fact that the audience was "not allowed" to sing with the orchestra as they had been in "My Fair Lady," and the names of the songs were not announced.

Prokofieff's "Peter and the Wolf" received a very thorough evaluation. It ranged from "a fake," "childish" and "too long" all the way to "I've heard it done before but it was absolutely nothing compared to this morning's performance."

Imaginative

One writer timed it for half an hour which was considered "too much." Another remarked that ". . . you could let your imagination run away with you" but a third countered this with "it was a bit beyond my imagination."

Many found it "interesting" and others "fascinating" largely because of the imitative effects achieved by the different instruments and the consequent added familiarity with those instruments.

Opinions on Mr. Gordon Petter's narration also varied. Some felt he did "a magnificent job" while others found him "hard to hear against the music." He was pronounced "very realistic" and chided gently for being "too imaginative."

Novelty Gone

There was plenty of protest from those divisions where "Peter and the Wolf" had been played on recordings before the concert. This robbed the Symphony performance of novelty, some even finding it "boring" or "too long."

"The Toreador's Song" from Bizet's "Carmen" was very popular. It was "stirring" and ". . . Anyone," observed one young commentator, enthusiastically, "could imagine a bull-fighter in a ring with a colosseum full of people cheering."

"The British Grenadiers" found much favor. It provided "a magnificent climax" and "it makes the blood tingle."

Nothing Missed

Promoters of performances before groups such as those who attended the symphony should always remember that nothing escapes them. One thousand four hundred and fifty pairs of eyes and ears, especially young ones, encompass every sight and sound. The recent audiences noticed, for example, that sketches were being made at the second concert; they commented on the lighting and the arrangement of the orchestra; they observed changes in the personnel of the orchestra between the two concerts; they totted up the "number of sailors in uniform" in the orchestra.

Sooner or later every section and every insrument received mention. The trumpet section was singled out for "brilliant tone;" the strings were "beautiful to hear;" the violins' "intonation was perfect;" the 'cellos "were off once and a mute fell out."

Tympani, Harp

But the typani and the harp received the lion's share of all the instrumental comment. The operations required to play the former were all carefully noted and described and the typanist himself appealed mightily to one commentator because "he seemed to be asleep but when his turn came he was up and ready to go."

One division expressed surprise at the number of ladies in the orchestra.

Mr. Gruber and Mr. Evens were very carefully noted, particularly as to their styles of conducting. While the former was described as "quiet" or in some similar term, the latter was frequently referred to as "bouncy."

No Surprise

The tempo of the second concert found much favorable comment but, within it, Haydn's "Surprise Symphony" was termed "beautiful" by one and "a flop" by another. "The 'Surprise Symphony'," observed one writer, "was not a surprise."

Despite the great popularity of "South Pacific," "My Fair Lady" and "The British Grenadiers", there were calls for 'more serious classical music" and others for Thomson's "Acadian Songs and Dances" "in its entirety."

A great many students recognized that they had combined education and pleasure and were grateful for both.

And, scattered throughout the hundreds of reports, were a great variety of graphic comments.

No Melody

"The thing that I look for in music is the melody which is very hard to determine in many so-called 'long hair' pieces."

Many noted that the concerts were much preferable to the same program on radio, TV, or recordings.

"Now I see that live music is like fresh fruit while recorded music is like canned fruit."

"The concert was over too soon" . . . "Now I know just how much I have been missing" . . . "After listening to the first symphony I looked forward to the second."

And yet another pronounced the Victoria Symphony Orchestra as "a nice change from everyday rock and roll."

The 'Symphony'

The reports displayed a fascinating list of variants on the title of the orchestra such as "a symphy," "a syphone" and the "sympathy orchestra." But practically always this was just a case of ". . . a rose by any other name."

U.S. Prize Surprises Organist

A Victoria musician and teacher has won a $7,000 music fellowship, one of two presented this year by the U.S. government.

Malcolm Hamilton, 2515 Beach Drive, was nominated without his knowledge by the faculty of the University of Washington, from which he graduated in 1955, and didn't know of the nomination until the award was made.

The fellowship, which will provide three years' further training at the university leading to a degree of doctor of musicology, was granted because of his interest in the music of the period of Bach and harpsichord music in particular.

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